

between husband and wives, between children of different wives, and between fellow wives. Polygyny, reinforced by the segregation of the sexes in everyday life and interests, renders the personal bond between husband and wife much less intimate than is the European ideal. Men are unwilling to spend much time in the company of women, and women prefer the company of their own sex. The polygynist must be most circumspect in his relations with his wives. He must treat them all with strict impartiality. Should he wish to give one a present, all must receive similar gifts. If he spends more time with one than another, this may be the cause of serious domestic discord. He must always be weighing and balancing lest preference shown to one should lead to trouble and unpleasantness. With such considerations uppermost, there is little chance of the development of companionship and communion between husband and wife, although there may be a high degree of co-operation and sympathy. It is generally only in his old age, when his wives have their own daughters-in-law and are already grandmothers, that a man allows himself the privilege of attaching himself openly to one of his wives, the one who has always treated him well. At this stage there is but little jealousy between the fellow wives, and a polygynous husband and one of his wives may sometimes in old age become a regular Darby and Joan. Where a man has one wife only and stays in his own small village without male companionship at home, their relationship becomes noticeably closer. This gain in intimacy is counterbalanced by a loss of independence on the part of the wife. Since there is now no need carefully to distinguish what belongs to the wife, the husband tends to take over most of the control, and the monogamous marriage of Christians, with its greater community of property between husband and wife, has thus its disadvantages as well as its merits. 595

A wife is expected to obey her husband, who may beat her if she does not; yet he may not interfere in her domestic arrangements. When a woman is busy (and she alone is the judge in this matter), her husband may have to wait till well after midday before receiving his first meal. She uses her own discretion in exchanging the produce of her fields, although she will generally not sell at a store without consulting her husband. Wife-beating is not uncommon, but it takes place usually when a man is drunk or suspects his wife of unfaithfulness. For an angry woman to attack her husband is not unusual and once considerable amusement was caused at a district head's court we attended when a man complained of being beaten by his wife. 593

It is the duty of a husband to make or buy clothes for his wife, build and repair her huts, provide her every year with storage receptacles and an enclosure for her harvest, and nowadays also to plough for her. Most men have one field of their own which they cultivate and, though they may ask their wives to help them with weeding and reaping, the produce is their own, used for beer-making or, in bad years, distributed among their wives. If his wife or any of his children is ill, a man must be unfailing in his efforts to find medicines or doctors that will provide a cure.

The position of a wife in her husband's home changes with the changing 596

596 years. For the first few years of her married life she is strictly controlled by her mother-in-law, has a great deal of work to do, and finds little time to attend dances and beer-drinks. Nowhere was the position of a bride more forcefully brought to our notice than in the case of Anna. We met Anna first as an unmarried girl in her own home, a noisy, untidy, empty-headed girl never stirring a finger to help her brother's wife, who, though hampered by a peevish child of two, did all the housework. A year later when we met her again, this time as a bride of six months' standing, we could hardly believe the transformation that had taken place. Here was Anna, quietly doing all the work, waiting on us as guests, smearing the courtyard in the intervals between her other duties, and generally comporting herself in a manner which a year previously we should have thought impossible. Strictly speaking, there is no limit to the length of time a wife should cook for her mother-in-law. If she has married an only or the youngest son, she will continue doing so all her life; otherwise she is generally given her own hearth when the next brother marries and a new bride enters the household. If a bride does not get on well with her mother-in-law, she may, even if there is no other bride, be given her own hearth after a year or so, but in a family where all work harmoniously together, two daughters-in-law may be seen cooking in common for their husband's mother. Every woman can, however, look forward to an old age when she, too, will have her daughter-in-law to relieve her of the hard work she is unable to do.

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595 A married woman moves about freely and goes to beer-drinks when she likes, but she would not go on a visit to her own people without consulting her husband or her mother-in-law. She may, if she is a doctor, own considerable property of her own in goats and cattle and, when her daughter gets married, she has a great deal to say in the disposal of the bride-price. Normally, the cattle coming in for a girl are used to obtain a wife for her uterine brother. If, however, there are more girls than boys, it is seldom that the mother will consent to its being used by the son of a fellow wife. In such a case it is usually given to the mother's brother, who, by using it, establishes a 'house' where the son of his niece will find a wife. Should the husband himself wish to obtain another wife with the cattle he will first have to come to an agreement with his wife, otherwise there may be a lot of trouble. Since a wife so obtained will have to cook for the wife whose daughter's cattle were used to obtain her, ill-feeling would lead to considerable disharmony and might end in breaking up the new marriage by causing the bride to run away.

595 The term for fellow wives, *vahadigani*, which the Lovedu translate as 'people who roast one another', is said to denote the state of tension and sometimes conflict that one finds between them. So bad does this become occasionally that one may find different wives of the same man living in different villages. Fellow wives may be jealous, yet they help one another in beer-making, lend each other utensils, work at each other's work-parties; and it is seldom that a woman gives her own child a tit-bit without also giving to other children that may be present. The chief wife, always the mother's brother's daughter, has no control over other wives. Where the chief wife is married only late in life, she is in

practice often of less importance than the wife married first, and there is sometimes quite a conflict between the principles of age and legality. 595

Various factors, such as the household arrangements of the polygynous system, tend to make the tie between a mother and her own children, and more especially between mother and son, very strong and lasting. It is often possible to distinguish between the brothers in a polygynous household by the degree of resemblance in general nature and character to their mother. Children share any stigma that may be attached to their mother, and according as a man likes a wife so he likes her children. There is thus a high degree of solidarity between uterine brothers and sisters, who always like each other more than siblings by other wives. The attachment between Lovedu mother and child rests upon the firm foundations of a suckling period of several years, during which the child spends much of its time snugly strapped to her back. It is in many ways also an easier relationship than that among Europeans, with fewer prohibitions, fewer punishments and fewer of the petty grounds of conflict associated with such refinements as keeping hands or clothes clean. 593 594

The Lovedu girl is much with her mother, but she leaves home to get married soon after puberty and it is the boy in whose later life the mother plays the greatest role. During his boyhood the mother is the champion of her son. If he has been bullied by another, it is she who will take up the cudgels for him, and many of the worst quarrels between women arise in defence of their children. A boy of fifteen was pulling about and beating a boy of ten because he had not gone out to herd. Two men, in passing, called on him to desist, but to no avail till one of them said to a child standing near, 'Run and tell his mother Dwagu is killing her child.' The mother arrived and harangued Dwagu, who left off, but stoutly defended himself against her scolding tongue, and there the matter ended. When a young man marries, his mother is the dominating figure in his household. She controls his relations with his wife, telling him how to conduct himself while she is pregnant or during the suckling period, giving permission (indirectly through other old women) for their first sexual intercourse. When Masilu, a young man from town, came home ill, it was his mother who took him to a doctor. Ramano, after eight years absence in town, came home because his mother called him back; and Madume, a married man with two children, succeeded in avoiding a dangerous ritual office largely because his mother did not want him to undertake it. Even though he may be head of the village with authority over all its inmates, a man will still be constantly appealing to his mother's greater age and experience for guidance in matters that fall outside his own experience, more especially if his father is dead. Yet the mother, who so greatly controls her son, will never dare to have dealings with a stranger in the absence of the men nor presume to show him over the village. The son is the natural guardian of his mother. Should it be decided that she should move away from her husband's village, even if the cause be witchcraft, her sons will accompany her. Upon the youngest son, more particularly, falls the duty of caring for his parents in their old age. 593

- 593 Within this general pattern, however, there can be infinite variations. Mulata beats his mother whenever he loses his temper and on one occasion severely wounded her with an axe. He is admittedly a bad lot and the talk of the neighbourhood, but such things do occur. Batamedi, who moved away from his brother's village and, as the youngest son, took his mother with him, did not provide her with blankets for the winter nor interfere when his wife shamefully neglected the old woman by visiting for months at her own home. So his mother betook herself back to her elder son, where she was accustomed to receiving better treatment.
- 603 The husband's mother, the grandmother of his children, is then an
854 important person, an essential member of the individual household. She has much to do with the children; she it is who, for the first few months, feeds and bathes the new baby. Having little to do, she tends the child while its mother is busy, and very often the young baby spends as much time strapped to its grandmother's back as to its mother's. Being old, the grandmother is mild in her treatment of the children, her policy being to pacify and placate rather than to force.
- 593 It is not easy to define the relationship between father and children. Because he spends most of his time with the men, there is little personal contact between father and young children, who in their turn are mostly in the company of those of their own age. A Lovedu child who lives in a large kraal may not see his father for days or speak to him for weeks. A girl has little to do with her father, but the boy finds that his father admonishes him or shows displeasure when he cries and on occasion inculcates manly values. The father keeps his distance, yet he becomes the personification of manly ideals, and a boy tries to be like his father. The father has authority, but his authority is never oppressive like that of European fathers, whose children live in much closer contact with them. If a boy has done wrong or let the cattle stray, he will avoid his father by not making an appearance at home till after dark. Dumedi spent two nights curled up in a sledge, afraid to appear at home lest his father should beat him for letting the goats stray. Fathers who wish to punish their sons are very often forced to resort to the plan of appearing at the entrance of the boys' sleeping hut long before dawn, there to round them up and beat them soundly before they have a chance of disappearing for the day! The father represents the polygynous family. Through him brothers by different mothers are linked and, not more than a few years back, fathers used sometimes to call their sons to sit with them at night. Then they would exhort the sons not to quarrel among themselves, to live together in peace, to be mutually helpful, and to behave as men. To-day, however, with the long absence of men in towns, this active education on the part of the father is rapidly disappearing.
- 593 Brothers by the same father, though not as closely linked as uterine brothers, nevertheless have certain responsibilities towards one another. They stand by each other in disputes and act in unison against outsiders. In claiming back bride-price for a deserting wife, a man will never act alone; he and his brothers will go together, showing a united front. If a man has to pay a fine and has no goat, his brothers will be expected to help him. When he dies, it is his brothers who will care for his widow

and children. Sometimes, in the absence of his brother in town, a man may be consulted by his brother's wife, but he has no real right over her. For a man to beat his brother's wife or order her about, as is said to be the case among Pondo, is quite unheard of. There is nothing special in the relationship between sisters, except that they may marry the same husband, for, quite apart from considerations of the sororate, it is thought at all times good to marry sisters, who will be less liable to make quarrelsome fellow-wives than unrelated girls. Obligations towards classificatory sisters and brothers, children of the mother's sister or father's brother, are not the same as those to brothers by the same father, and the tie is not nearly so close.

Lovedu society is characterized by a very special relationship between brother and sister, a relationship that is given shape to and maintained by the Lovedu pattern of bride-price involving marriage with the mother's brother's daughter and supplemented by the role of women in the religious system. With this are also bound up the close links between two groups of people, the *somakhulu* and *ngqululu*—a man's own people and those of his mother or wife. The linking of uterine brothers and sisters in pairs, in order that the brother may obtain a wife with the cattle received for the sister, creates this special relationship between them and obliges the man to send his daughter to marry at his sister's place. No man will accept a suitor for his daughter until he has ascertained whether his linked sister wants the girl or not, for though in general it is the sister's son who marries the girl, it is the sister who receives a bride to stamp for her and lessen the labours of her old age. The sister has, in fact, a legal right to the girl. If the girl were to run away or be married to some one else, the court would support the father's sister's claim to the girl or the return of the cattle her brother used. Legally, it is even possible for the sister to dissolve the marriage of her brother by demanding back these cattle, but in practice this is rarely found. It is a common custom for a bridal party to call in at the village of the sister, by means of whose cattle the bride has been obtained, 'to show her the girl who is to bear a bride for her son'. A goat will then be slaughtered by her husband for the bridal party to show their pleasure in the marriage. A value that is constantly being expressed in Lovedu society is that it is fitting and desirable for a girl to 'cook for' her father's sister.

The house of the brother is thought to have been created by the sister whose cattle made the marriage possible. That is why, when he builds a new village, it is the sister who has to draw the magic circle of protection, which renders it safe from witches. When the sister visits her old home, it is in the house of this wife that she will 'put her things' and make herself at home and, when she is called to beer, she will be given a special pot in the house of this wife. The sister even wields a certain amount of authority in the house of her brother, as was well illustrated at a gathering we attended where the man of the house was quarrelling with his wife about an unwitted guest. In the midst of the uproar a voice was heard: 'This is my village which I have built. I will have no unseemly behaviour here.' It was the sister rebuking her brother, who subsided immediately and went on with the ceremonial as if nothing had happened. So strong

- 593 is the interest of a sister in the house established by her cattle that she may on occasion even exercise some control in her brother's choice of a wife. Dwagu wanted to marry Mabula, who was already married. His sister's husband then said, 'We shall not allow you to use my cattle to marry that woman. She will bring nothing but trouble.' If the wife obtained by means of the sister's cattle is badly treated by her husband, she may run to his sister, who will intervene on her behalf, or even in extreme cases arrange for her to live permanently away from her husband, who could then never claim a return of the bride-price from his wife's parents. Muhale, whom we knew well, had, under the influence of his second wife, chased away his chief wife, who ran to his sister. She advised the wife to make some pardon beer and take it as a peace-offering, but when he refused this his sister arranged for the woman to live with a widow in the village next door to her. Now, when Muhale's second wife quarrels and refuses to cook for him, he takes refuge with the wife he chased away till the storm is over!

- [782] The influence of a sister is reinforced by her religious position. At the annual harvest offering to the gods, it is always the eldest sister in the family who has to officiate. She is the one best able to intercede with the spirits. Any displeasure or secret grievance against her brother on her part may have the effect of stirring up the spirits to cause illness in his household, especially among his children (certain other relatives also have this power, but one hears most often of the sister). Hence it is said, 'The sister should roast pipe; if she roasts the village [is angry] it will go up in flames' (*khadi e hadiga dithaga; ya hadiga mutse u ya swa*). Sometimes a sister may threaten her brother, saying, 'If I complain, nothing will be good in your village.' On the death of the father, it is the eldest sister who, together with the father's brother, divides out the inheritance, and, at the only installation of a district head that we were able to witness, the emblems of office were handed over to the young heir's sister for him, though he was already in his twenties. In view of all these facts, a man's sister has great influence over him and may be called to remonstrate with him, more especially in matters affecting his own household when even his parents have been unsuccessful. But she has no right to interfere without just cause and, if she were to make needless trouble, her brother would very soon ask her to leave his village in peace.

- Not all sisters play the role that has been ascribed in general terms to a man's sister. Though every sister is potentially priestess and guardian of her brother's household, in practice all these offices are seldom combined in one person. In religious ceremonies affecting the family as a whole, the eldest daughter of the chief wife would officiate; in case of illness, a man's uterine sister might be asked to officiate. If the sister whose cattle has been used is younger than her brother, she may have little influence as compared with her elder sister; furthermore, where the sister is a woman of no personality, her influence may be negligible. It is a man's uterine sisters that play the biggest part in his life, for in this, 605 as in everything, the individual family is always asserting itself as against 595 the larger, polygynous family group. A classificatory sister, one by the mother's sister or father's brother, or one by a wife of the father other

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than the chief wife, plays little part in a man's life; she is merely a female ⁶⁰⁵ relative to whom a certain amount of respect and attachment is due. ⁵⁹⁵ Often a woman's son marries daughters of several of her brothers. It is, however, only to the daughter of that brother who used her cattle that she has a right—has, as the Lovedu put it, an 'entrance' to his village.

In view of the position of sisters and brothers later in life, one would ⁵⁹³ not expect great familiarity or freedom between them during their childhood. Brother and sister may talk freely to each other, but if they rollick together their parents will stop them. Hence the riddle, 'What is ⁶²⁴ it that is at hand and yet beyond reach?' (*Kha ntsita khi e ma?*) The answer, 'The breast of my sister,' refers to the playful catching hold of the breasts of girls by young boys, which is taboo in case of a sister. In strong contrast to the free, yet proper, relationship between brother and sister stands the joking relationship between cross-cousins. Derived from the brother-sister relationship is that of the father's sister, who is accorded honour and respect by the children of the house she has established. The term *Ahadi* is used loosely to denote either father's sister or eldest sister, for it is the eldest sister who will take over the religious functions of the father's sister after her death.

A well-marked characteristic of Lovedu society, one that clearly ⁶⁰² distinguishes it from the strictly patrilineal Zulu, Xhosa, and Pondo, is ⁶⁰⁴ the importance of the mother's side of the family. Nothing of interest or importance takes place without their presence; even at the annual harvest beer offerings given to the gods on the father's side, relatives on the mother's side, who are not concerned in the religious aspect of the ceremony, will be present for the beer and social amenities. Important in maintaining close links between a man and his mother's relatives are the bonds of interdependence between the families of a brother, and the sister whose cattle he used. The sister's son is a potential son-in-law, who will be accorded great honour in the household of his mother's brother. A man's mother may also be the *Ahadi* who has to go and make offerings in the mother's brother's household, and in her absence her son might officiate for her. Later, when a man is engaged to his mother's brother's daughter, there will be gifts of beer from the girl's family. They are thus bound together by a variety of links.

But the greatest of all bonds between a man and his mother's side of ⁶⁰² the family is conceived by the Lovedu to be one of love. There is a saying, usually quoted by women, '*Wa nana u nana; u nana gi mabakataka*,' which, freely translated, means, 'Love lies on the mother's side of the family; ownership on the father's'. One's relationship with the mother's side of the family is modelled on that towards a mother and is much influenced by the petting and spoiling received at the hands of the maternal grandmother, with whom most children spend a few years of their life, generally soon after the birth of a younger brother or sister. Every child recalls with delight the good time he had when at his mother's brother's village with his mother's mother; how she treated him to tin-bits, how she scolded or beat only her son's children if her grandchildren quarrelled and fought. For, it is said, a woman loves her daughter's children (who only come on visits) far more than those of her

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foundation of happy marriage. It is an attitude inculcated by the immense marriage ceremonial, and it must be understood in its total complex within the social structure. Sexual adventures and compatibilities may be sought outside the marriage relationships. And so we have the *swagaru* institution, a realistic concession to the impossibility of completely conditioning so primeval a force as sexual attraction to the purposes of the social structure; it also meets the difficulty of the long suckling period. As might be expected, it is married rather than unmarried people who have their lovers (*swagaru*). Nevertheless, a European finds it difficult to understand that old women so frequently have liaisons with young married men and that these men so frequently seek their adventures with women who might well be their mothers or grandmothers. But in the Lovedu system it is not unnatural that our preferences and our conceptions of sexual attraction should as often as not be completely reversed.

The ideal for girlhood is chastity, but the society is rather impatient of both men and women who spy upon the love affairs of their spouses. These affairs are not matters to be talked about; but, on the other hand, despite the mocking songs sung on special occasions (the *syali*) about deflowered girls, the society has a humane outlook towards what we call illegitimacy. Unmarried girls among pagans rarely have illegitimate children; this is more frequent among Christians. The seducer is fined twice as much as in the case of adultery with a married woman, yet only one-third the amount that is customary among Shangana-Tonga. The fine is certainly not the main deterrent; nor is the disgrace of the girl. She maintains her position in society; she is congratulated by friends and relatives; even the queen herself may, as we have seen, pay a visit to see and praise the infant. The girl has been 'spoilt', but she proudly displays her baby. She will not have offers of marriage from young men, but older men are wiser. Great blame falls upon the guilty man. It is a curious mixture of values, for there is no doubt that virginity in a girl is highly esteemed. In the marriage ceremonial, as we have seen, virginity entitles both the bride's mother and herself to special rewards. There is even a symbolical reference to it in the calabash that the bride used to take with her to her husband's home: if it was whole, it occasioned joy and was proudly worn by her younger sister; if not, the girl's people had to make amends with beer.

New values and sensitiveness to-day insist that the absence of chastity be concealed, not that its presence be publicly applauded or rewarded. Girls are still examined, especially at the *khoba*, but the matter is private; and the public display of a calabash has fallen into disuse. Yet the sins of the girl-mother are not visited on the innocent infant; it remains a thing of joy to every one. Abortions are said to be common, but the only evidence adduced is the high incidence of lung diseases (*girc* or *bulwaga* eye sound). A man gets *girc* from intercourse with a woman who has had an abortion; it is not merely the most dreaded of all diseases, a death from *girc* may prevent rain, and men are again and again in their lives warned against promiscuously consorting with women.

Sexual compatibility between husband and wife is a minor matter.

- 593 If a wife refuses cohabitation, there is usually a good reason, but a reason that has nothing to do with sexual incompatibility. The husband concerned will perhaps solicit the aid of the old women; but never will he dare say that he can go elsewhere for his pleasure, for she has equal power to retaliate in that manner. The Lovedu know of the belief of other tribes that continued sexual intercourse after pregnancy builds up the child forming in the womb. They also continue intercourse, but they do not stress, and even deny, that semen builds up the foetus. It is worth noting that sexual intercourse at a late stage of pregnancy (after the seventh month) is considered not quite correct, and this ideal is reflected in the anger of the midwives, who may reprimand the husband if they find signs, as they think, of his semen on the new-born infant. Nor is the sexual act brought into relation with so many special occasions as elsewhere; it has not to any extent been institutionalized in connexion with dangerous or new enterprises, as is the case among the Shangana-Tonga in their midst. Full coitus is taboo while a mother suckles her child; the milk of the new pregnancy will poison the child, but a child is not sent away when sexual relations are resumed. Even the theme of fertility is handled with moderation or submerged under a mass of ritual. A wife is not ochred on her first pregnancy and, in those ceremonies that are directed to fertility, this motive is kept far in the background. Likewise, barrenness in a woman is not regarded as entitling a man to nullify his marriage and, when a substitute is sent, the children are presumed to be, not the children of the barren wife, but of the substitute. The conception of 'buying a womb' is negated by the fact that full *mumywalu* is given for the substitute, who is not subservient to, but independent of, the barren wife. These arrangements also imply that barrenness is not a great humiliation.
- 837 A married woman is theoretically denied the right of having children if her husband is impotent or absents himself for years. In practice, 'picking up children in the veld' is realistically tolerated, but it must be done surreptitiously, for the custom in other tribes, whereby the husband appoints a 'bull', is not approved. A wife can never be lent to another, for, as the proverb runs, 'About clothes you may say, "Lend them to me," but never about a woman' (*ng'adimemi gi a guvo, musadia a na ng'adime*).

Marital fidelity is not a matter of great importance; a father will reprimand his adulterous son, but only because in his pursuit of other women, he fails in his duty to look after his wife—that is the main thing in marriage. Similarly a wife's adultery can never be the cause of divorce; but it must be judicious; it must not offend the proprieties. No doubt a man has greater opportunities than a woman and before marriage one may speak of a double standard of morality, but after marriage the differences are small. Both a husband and a wife can administer medicines to the other partner, making extra-marital irregularities very dangerous to health. A wife during pregnancy by a lover is also a grave danger to her husband. On the whole, the remarkable thing is, not that there is marital infidelity, but that there is so little of it. After all, a man may not 'mix' his wives; he cannot go from the one to the other; he cannot bring

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is not primarily conceived of as raising seed; his main duty is to care for her and to maintain intact the *munywalo* scheme.

The economic aspect of marriage is more important than the sexual. The duty of a niece to marry at her cattle-linked aunt's is phrased as an economic obligation. A wife has power because she is the provider of food. There are many other sources of the influence of an old woman, both over her son and her son's wife, and they have economic implications. Nagambi, a man of thirty-five, scorned to bow to his wife's wishes except when she was possessed; yet the wishes of his mother dictated when he should go to town or return home, what land he should plough and when, what medicines or doctors he should get for his baby. The apparent helplessness of women when a stranger calls and asks for information or wishes to do business is not wholly assumed, for theoretically business and politics are the affairs of the men; but often enough it is convenient to defer to the men and to exercise a woman's influence behind the scenes. Thrift and industry are the virtues valued in a wife; it is the hard-working girl who is coveted as a bride. For that reason also, a faithful concubine (*mugaula*) has in practice a high status.

Madume's brother had both a wife and a *mugaula*, and when he died the *mugaula* took all his property for her son. Madume, who denied her right to do this, brought an action and the case eventually came to the capital. The court wholly ignored the issue as to whether a *mugaula* had legal rights. It contented itself with urging the *mugaula* to give Madume control of the assets which had accrued from the work of his brother's son, warning Madume not to press his case. 'Did not the *mugaula* cook and work long for your brother?' it asked. 'And was it not due to her thrift that there are goods? You are wrong to worry her.' Unions with concubines are often stable and economically satisfactory. Quarrels, even jealousies, between a man and his *mugaula* sometimes come before the courts, just as if they were disturbances within a family. Muhale complained, not that his son was living with a *mugaula*, but that the *mugaula*'s laziness had prevented him from giving a beer-drink for a whole year. When the jealousy of the *mugaula* threatened domestic trouble, the queen considered the matter important enough to send a messenger, who, with the district head, came to settle the dispute; the court dealt with the matter exactly as if the parties were married, urging mutual forbearance and co-operation. A man who illicitly lives upon a woman, eating from her porridge bowls (*madilo*), acquires no rights over her or her children, and is derisively called 'father of the porridge bowls' (*romadilo*).

Instead of attempting to deal with the conflicts and tangles in *munywalo* and marriage, we shall refer to a few of their aspects merely. The conditioning of cross-cousins for their obligations as marital partners does not eliminate temperamental differences, and in modern conditions, which emphasize individual acquisitiveness as against reciprocity, the burden of obligations in the *munywalo* ring becomes too heavy. A father, more intent upon the polygynous circle of huts than upon maintaining the chain of *munywalo* exchanges, may use the cattle coming in from his daughter's marriage to acquire a wife for himself; and an almost

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Category of conflict	Witch(es)	Victim(s)	No. of cases	Remarks as to nature of conflict	Percentage of cases
I. Relatives (a) House or co-wife against house or co-wife—cont.	Co-wife and her mother	Co-wife's child	2	Favouritism of husband and other mixed motives	24
	Inherited wife	Co-wife and her children	2	Use of cattle of one house by another and questions of prestige	
	Widow	Fellow widow's child	1	Property arrangements	
	Wife of brother	Wife of another brother	1	Complex jealousies	
	Son of co-wife	Chief son and his wife	1	Status and position	
(b) Wife against husband	Wife	Husband	2	Friction, favouritism of other wives, position	30
	Wife and/or wife's mother	Husband's adulterine child or lover	4	Sexual jealousy and neglect of wife	
	Wife	Husband's sister's child	1	Disagreement about marriage of children and <i>marywalo</i>	
	Wife	Husband's brother, his wife, or his child	2	Position, jealousy	
	Wife's mother	Husband's child	1	Disagreements	

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Category of conflict	Witch(es)	Victim(s)	No. of cases	Remarks as to nature of conflict	Percentage of cases
(c) Husband against wife	Husband	Wife	1	Pre-marital seduction and <i>munywalo</i> trouble	
	Husband	Wife's adulterine child	2	Husband impotent; sexual jealousy	
	Husband	Wife's sister	1	Husband jilted	
	Husband	Brother's son's wife and her mother	1	Revenge for misfortune (illness)	
	Husband	Wife's brother's daughter's husband	1	Wife's brother refused his daughter as wife to witch's son	
	Husband's mother	Wife		Unfaithfulness of wife	16
	Husband's mother	Wife's sister	1	Wife's sister jilted witch	
(d) Parent and own child	Son	Father	1	Son wished to oust father from position as district head	6
	Father	Son	1	Son cohabited with young wife of father	
	Father	Son's wife	1	Son cohabited with inherited wife of father	
(e) Uterine brothers and sisters	Elder sister	Younger sister	1	Younger sister jilted elder sister's husband	4
	Sister (and mother)	Brother's child	1	Brother resents power of sister, and <i>munywalo</i> trouble	
Total relatives					70

855 mother's mother, especially in cases where the next baby has arrived before three or four years have elapsed; and a young motherless child is often sent by his father to his mother's brother's people (where his mother's mother will be) in preference to being handed over to a fellow wife of the mother, for it is generally considered that the mother's people are best able to rear (*hodisa*) a child.

593 A very special relationship exists between a man and his sister, especially his eldest sister, who is or will become the priestess of the family. She is the person who has greatest influence over him, who will be called to reason with him when even his parents are unable to persuade him. The sister whose cattle he used to obtain a wife also has a special interest in his household affairs. This house is the place where she will 'put her things' and make herself at home when visiting her old home; his daughter will one day marry her son; his wife may run to her or her elder sister if he ill-treats her, whereupon she will remonstrate with her brother or even in extreme cases arrange for permanent protection of such a woman away from her husband.

[753] The sister's rights are supported by a powerful sanction, for if she 'feels dissatisfied in her heart' owing to bad treatment at the hands of her brother, the ancestors are liable to make his children ill. When this happens, the brother will have to approach his sister humbly to come and end matters, after openly airing her grievances, by interceding with the ancestors on behalf of his children. Not all sisters are, however, in practice able to control and influence their brothers: here, as in all human relationships, much depends on the character and good sense of the parties concerned; and I have seen a 'bad lot' just back from town slap the face of a sister who had been called to remonstrate with him about a loose woman he had brought to his wife's house from town.

613 The clan, if it can be said to exist at all, does so only in a vague way, and there are no functions or usages associated with it. Relatives belong to no clearly marked group but can be traced in ever-widening circles from the individual family just as we trace relationships in our own society. There is no term for clan: *moloko* refers to relatives on both father's and mother's side, while *khoro*, a word most commonly used to denote that portion of any village where the men sit, but also meaning court, clan, or tribe, is too vague in its connota-

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A sister's cattle-providing capacity gives her a pivotal position in the social structure. It is the cattle accruing from her marriage that 'build' a house for her brother and 'beget' children to her lineage. Over this house she has rights that can be legally and mystically enforced. She settles disputes in it, and distributes its possessions when its owner dies. She invokes the gods on its behalf; no one, not even her brother himself (the husband and head of the house), can ill treat the wife of this house without having to reckon with her, and any breach of the marriage relationship is void without her consent. It will be evident that no judgement of the Lovedu courts in regard to a marriage has much chance of being carried out without the assistance and co-operation of this sister. For this and other reasons women are prominent as intermediaries and conciliators in the society. It should also be no surprise that any woman may marry wives, whose children call her 'father'; that many women are kraal heads and some of them the most important districts heads in the country. As chief officiators in offerings and sacrifice women play an important role also in religion.

Structurally the agnatic group, of which the cattle-linked brother is a member, is a minor lineage three to four generations deep, which supplies wives to the lineage into which his sister has married. The obligations of providing wives on the one hand and returning cattle on the other cannot, indeed, be enforced beyond the actual houses concerned and their lineal descendants, but the relationships of reciprocity and the behaviour patterns of helpfulness on the part of the wife-receivers, and of honouring and periodically bringing beer on the part of the wife-providers, are usually extended beyond these houses to the whole minor lineage and, where the relationships have been long established and are kept alive as part of the political structure, they may embrace major lineages five to eight generations deep. The wife-providers are called either maternal uncles (*vamalumé*), since a man's mother's brother (*malumé*) is ideally his wife's father, or grandparents (*vamukhulu*), since his maternal grandfather is the male representative of his wife's agnatic group (being her paternal grandfather). Conversely, the wife-receivers are called either sons-in-law (*vatsexi*), because the lineage into which a man's sister marries is also the lineage into which his daughter marries, or *vaquhulu* (grandchildren or sister's sons), a man's sister's son being the same person as his daughter's husband or his father's granddaughter. It should be noted that, even though these wife-providing and wife-receiving lineages are related through marriage, the relationships between them are not merely affinal. The wife-providers and wife-receivers are not merely brothers-in-law but also cognates—wife-providers being maternal uncles and grandparents, and wife-receivers being children of paternal aunts, sisters, or daughters. A man's maternal kin are also his affines, while the maternal kin and sororal affines are merged with the paternal kin.

This merging of various types of kin is perhaps the reason why all four lines of kin—father's father, father's mother, mother's father, mother's

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769 arms' to cause drought in 1938, it was because he had for personal reasons been buried, at his own express request made before death, in the Christian cemetery instead of in the damp shade of the forest, like his forebears.

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● 573 It would appear that this lack of interest on the part of the ancestral gods in the morality of their descendants is in conformity with the pattern of the relationship between living parents and their children. Parental protection and care are given not by virtue of the morality or conduct of their children; it is one of the imperatives of the kinship bond. A parent loves his wayward, bad son as much as, if not more than, his well-behaved, virtuous children. It is only a bad personal relationship between parent and child or neglect of filial duty that could cause a parent to withhold his protection.

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769 Sanctions for right behaviour are, first and most important, the pressure of public opinion and of the reciprocal arrangements of the political and social structure. A man conforms to the code because of his self-esteem and the high-regard he has for his reputation for fairness and moderation, wisdom and ability to get on with others, generosity and helpfulness, not merely among his kin but in the wider circle of his friends and neighbours. The next important group of sanctions are the pain and misfortune that may follow if those he has injured use vengeance magic or resort to witchcraft and sorcery against him. Certain types of conduct carry their own automatic ritual sanctions which form a third group of deterrents, even though there is little pressure of public opinion against the conduct and no necessary or immediate consequence to the person himself, unless indeed he is repeatedly guilty. Finally, duties towards the ancestors, such as tendance and recognition, have the religious sanctions of ancestral anger in the form of illness, or misfortune. Ancestral displeasure can also be inferred as a sanction acting indefinitely and over a vague area of conduct to reinforce men's obligations to kin, generally those kin who stand to them in a relation of some authority. This inference may be made, not because ancestors ever directly cause misfortune to a descendant for breaches of correct behaviour to kin as they do in the case of neglect of themselves, but because bad luck may be attributed to failure in one's duties to kin.

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577 Ancestor worship of the Lovedu plays hardly any part, then, in upholding tribal morality. Nor are people so delicately conditioned to the values of the society that they spontaneously react to conscience. Their moral code is not markedly internalized and Lovedu have no sense of 'sin'. Since there are few repressed fears the pressure of which on the mind can be removed by confession and atonement, a sense of guilt seldom moves men, and offenders very rarely repent merely at the dictates of conscience. Their sense of shame is more delicately internalized, but it drives men to make restitution only when the misdeed has been exposed or brought into relation with the system of reciprocities. Lovedu are sensitive mainly to the intangible forces of the social system, and the moral code is upheld mainly

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ships between the families involved but upon it rests the whole character of the domestic group. Payment of bride-price transfers the reproductive powers of the woman to the husband's agnatic group. The husband has genetrical as well as uxorial rights. Genetrical rights apply not only to any children born after the marriage whoever their biological father might be, but also in retrospect, so that any child born before marriage automatically becomes the child of whoever pays the bride-price, with full rights of succession and inheritance from its sociological father. There is thus, in contrast to other tribes such as the Zulu, no way in which a Lobedu man can obtain the right to his biological child other than by marrying its mother. Emphasis on sociological as opposed to biological fatherhood among the Lobedu is very strong and this is an important factor in Lobedu social structure. The rights of a father to a child involve control over it; the right to the bride-price of a daughter (subject to the right of her brother to marry with his sister's cattle and of her mother to the services of the woman married with her daughter's bride-price); and corresponding to his right to his daughter's bride-price the duty to help his son to marry. A father may and often does marry an additional wife with his daughter's bride-price. A father also has the right to be cared for in his old age by his sons.

The levirate is practised, the junior levirate being more common than the senior levirate. The brother raises seed to the deceased and takes over the responsibility of a father and husband though the children he begets are counted as belonging to his deceased brother. Frequently the heir, eldest son of the chief 'house' inherits a young wife of his father. In this case, similarly, the children born of the union are looked upon as the deceased's, i.e., as brothers and sisters of the heir, not his children. The sororate also is practised in all its forms, sororal polygyny being very common. Where a sister is sent to 'awaken the house (*ho dsasa ndq*)' of a barren or deceased wife full bride-price is due for her although, since bride-price is never an absolutely fixed amount, less may be asked for than in the first marriage.

The marriage of a woman transfers to her husband's group the right to her labour. Initially it is the husband's mother even more than the husband himself that benefits, as we shall

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Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lovedu
 husband is expected to play his part in producing food for his ⁵⁹⁵
 family. Every married man, therefore, has a field of his own ²⁴¹
 which he cultivates with the help of his wives. The produce of ²⁴²
 this field is used for any beer- or work-parties that the man
 may wish to give and is a kind of bank upon which his wives
 may draw when they run short. If, however, a man helps one
 wife from his personal stores he must give all his wives an equal
 amount irrespective of their needs. When he first marries, the
 husband works with his wife in their common field. On marry-
 ing a second wife he acquires a field of his own (in addition to
 the one for his new wife) which his wives take it in turn to
 weed. It is said that if he had no field of his own but were
 merely to help each wife in turn to cultivate her field there
 would be endless trouble in maintaining equality between
 them. One of them for instance might say, 'How is it that when
 you come and work in my field you just sit but when you go
 to the field of the mother of So and So even the shade doesn't
 tempt you!'

A father is responsible for helping his sons to marry. But ⁵⁹³ ●
 since a man seldom possesses cattle other than those already ⁵⁸³
 involved in bride-price exchange and a son uses the cattle of
 his sister, boys in a 'house' in which there are no girls often
 have to go out and work or with the help and advice of their
 father acquire bride-price in other ways. In the old days an ⁴⁴⁷
 orphan usually hired out his services to carry salt or iron ore
 from far countries in order in this way to acquire marriage hoes
 or cattle. Expenses in goats and money over and above the
 cattle given in marriage are met by the boy himself with the
 help of his father. A father should see to it that his son is pro-
 vided with a field when he marries but in practice it is very
 often the mother who concerns herself with this problem. The
 father has jural control over his sons and is responsible for their
 debts.

The wives in a polygynous household differ in status. The ⁵⁹⁶
 chief wife is the daughter of the mother's brother—the cattle-
 linked or any uterine mother's brother or mother's half-brother.
 She will bear the heir and future head of the village. Where
 there has been no marriage with the mother's brother's
 daughter it is the first wife, the one married with his father's
 cattle that is chief wife. A chief wife exercises no control over

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595 house should not be used by the son of another house. If this is
 422 done (as it sometimes is if one wife has only daughters and
 583 another only sons) this immediately establishes a new relationship between half-brother and sister who now become cattle-linked; and the girl whose cattle were used has the right to 'follow the tracks of her cattle' to ask for a daughter-in-law from that 'house'.

595 A 'house' is never wholly dependent in economic matters on
 423 the husband and his lineage. It has other possible sources to
 602 exploit. Thus a married woman may, and often does, get fields
 [428] from her own people to cultivate. The difference between these fields and those given by her husband's people is that the latter are hers as a right and are inherited by her sons; the former she obtains through the goodwill of her blood-kin and on her death they revert back to them unless the children are still young and the fields are needed to feed them. Similarly, though
 593 it is the father's duty and responsibility to help his sons to
 602 marry and though uterine brothers always help one another, a man who has a married sister very often turns to her husband or to the sister's son for help with cattle to marry a wife. There is a difference, however, between help given by a uterine brother and that given by a relative on the mother's side or an affine—a brother does not expect to be repaid but help from other categories of relative becomes converted into a marriage bond or has to be repaid. The close bond between uterine brothers is indicated in the saying 'uterine brothers share even the head of a locust'.

595 Each 'house' is distinguished, then, from that of other wives
 602 of the husband by its cattle-links and obligations to the wife's
 769 side of the family (and later the daughters' husbands' families) and by dependence on ancestors on the mother's (i.e., wife's) side in addition to those on the father's side.

584 In the case of preferential marriage, too, the 'house' is all-important. Here, in contrast to marriage with strangers where the boy's family initiates negotiations, the first approach is usually made by the girl's people who bring the matter in the first instance to their sister, the woman of the 'house' concerned. Thus, for example, when Dumedi obtained cattle from the marriage of his eldest daughter by his first wife (a mother's brother's daughter) her people approached his mother

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suggesting that as the first wife was not strong they should send ⁵⁸⁴ her uterine sister as a little 'follower' to help her. Finding that her son was agreeable she reported the matter to his eldest half-brother, head of the homestead, who discussed the matter with his brothers.

The ultimate guarantor of the interests and economic inde- ⁵⁸³pendence of the 'house' is the cattle-linked sister with whose ⁶⁰² bride-price the wife was obtained. As we have seen, she occupies a very special position in the 'house' built by her cattle. Even before her brother's bridal party arrives at his homestead with the new bride she is taken to his married sister's homestead where a goat is slaughtered for her in recognition of their special relationship. When the sister visits her old home she will 'put down her things' and make herself at home in the hut of this wife of her brother. She is the first to be called to beer there; she must be invited to all activities such as work-parties held by the 'house'; all sickness is reported to her; she is called in to discuss the marriage of all sons and daughters of that 'house'. She or her eldest uterine sister is the one who magically ⁷⁸⁹ protects a new homestead by drawing a medicated branch in a magical circle around it. If her father and mother are dead she sees to it that her brother treats his wife properly. He cannot ⁵⁸⁶ chase her away or divorce her unless his sister believes his action to be justifiable; and she may, and very often does, take her brother's wife to live with her in her husband's village if he ill-treats her. She has an interest in this 'house' for here her son will find a wife. When her brother dies it is she and her ⁷²⁹ sisters who will distribute the inheritance. The sanction for ⁷²⁶ her control is a religious one: if she is 'dissatisfied in her heart' this may 'stir up the ancestors' and cause a child of her brother to be ill—a very powerful weapon.

Development of a House

Let us consider the growth and development of a house for ⁵⁹² it is only by a very gradual process that a house reaches ⁵⁷¹ full stature. The marriage of every woman marks the birth of a new unit which may become in time an independent homestead though it does not always do so. This is possible at the earliest only when the eldest son has married a wife and

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592 often, if at all, only after the death of both the father and his
 571 heir, the eldest brother who succeeded him as head of the
 homestead. Full independence is not an ideal that is striven
 for.

592 In its early stages the new unit or incipient 'house' is still
 571 dependent on the bridegroom's natal house (house of orienta-
 593 tion). The new bride works for her mother-in-law. She has no
 606 fields of her own to begin with, no utensils, nor a hearth and
 very often not even a sleeping hut of her own, the young couple
 using the mother-in-law's sleeping hut while she sleeps in her
 kitchen hut. The bride cooks on her husband's mother's hearth,
 works with her husband in a field allocated to them and helps
 her mother-in-law in hers. The husband will, if he has not
 done so before bringing his bride home, build her a new hut
 after the marriage at any time convenient to him. Simeon
 made sun-dried bricks himself, paid one pound to have the
 walls built, had a work-party for the framework of the roof
 and did the thatching himself. A man's father may help him
 but usually a young man uses his own money earned by previous
 migrant labour.

A woman cooks for her mother-in-law until a new bride,
 either of her husband's brother or of her husband arrives when
 she may be given her own pots. When Simeon's second wife
 arrived both wives cooked together for the mother-in-law for a
 while. Then when they began to disagree one (the younger
 one in this case because she was unrelated) was given her own
 pots to cook separately. Being given her own hearth is an
 important thing in a woman's married life marked by a little
 ceremony and a visit home to announce her new status. Even
 when she has her own hearth, however, she must continue to
 provide food for her parents-in-law. Children are thus an
 insurance against old age and it is the duty and responsibility
 of a son, more particularly the youngest son, to care for his
 mother in her old age. The father may have young wives to
 care for him when his elder sons are married.

593 Even after his marriage a man remains under the jural control
 571 of, and subordinate to, his father. Only after his father's death
 571 is he free to choose whether to remain in the village under the
 heir or to hive off. Sometimes, though rarely, a married son
 does, however, quarrel with his father and move away. Mostly

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such a quarrel involves the mother rather than the son and the whole house hives off, the son taking his mother with him. ⁵⁹³

The birth of the first child is an important step in the development of a house. The Lobedu child is born in a homestead in which there are at least three generations represented—that of the grandmother, that of the parents, including usually also the father's brothers and unmarried sisters and that of his own contemporaries. The first child is tended largely by the father's mother while the mother goes about the hard work of stamping, working in the fields, fetching firewood if there are no young sisters of the husband to help, and cooking. ⁵⁷¹ ⁵⁹² ⁵⁷¹ ⁶⁰³ ⁶⁰²

The husband's mother is an essential part of the household and has a dominating influence. She controls and advises her son, especially in regard to his relations with his wife and the needs of his children, and he usually defers to her knowledge and experience. Long after her sons are married and even when they have grandchildren the unit is known as her *masha* (house). It would seem that a unit of husband, wife and child would hardly be viable in a subsistence economy based predominantly on the agricultural activities of the women. Even the smallest Lobedu homestead includes the husband's mother. It is only when there are several adolescent children or the cash earnings of the husband enable a wife to buy the staple food instead of relying wholly upon what she grows herself that smaller units can survive. Even then they generally live near, and attach themselves to, some relative.

Once children are born, the wife's brother (mother's brother to the children) begins to play a part in forging links between them and the relatives on the mother's side. He will give gifts to the sister's son (*muduhulu*) who often goes to stay for a while with his mother's people; and in his turn the sister's son whenever he returns from migrant labour will be expected to give a gift to his mother's brother. Sometimes he also helps a mother's brother with cattle to marry. As the size of a man's family increases more fields may be needed to feed the children and very often these are obtained by the wife from her own people. ⁵⁹² ⁵⁷¹ ⁶⁰² ⁶⁰⁴

The marriage of the first daughter brings about the first acquisition by the developing house of a large amount of property in bride-price and ensures, even in the absence of sons, the continuation of the house. As important is the fact ⁵⁹² ⁵⁷¹ ⁶⁰⁶

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592 that the man has now a son-in-law, whom he can approach for
 571 economic help whenever he is in need. His wife, too, if she
 606 needs anything can brew beer to take as *khirola* for her son-in-law, or crack open *morula* nuts and take them as a gift, in return for which he will give her money or whatever he can. *Khirola* may be taken even to the uterine brother of a son-in-law for
 [602] he also is a *muduhulu*. A man looks more and more to his affines for economic help as his father ages and his brothers become involved in their own commitments. To the wife the marriage of her daughter is also very important for a different reason. This makes it possible for her to have a daughter-in-law. For on the marriage of her son a woman stops cooking and in addition has the help of her daughter-in-law in her garden work. If she has no son she can in the last resort always use the bride-price to 'marry' a girl herself who will relieve her of the most heavy and onerous household and agricultural work.

592 With the marriage of his sons there is a gradual handing
 571 over of the reins to the younger generation which is completed by the man's death, when the eldest son of his chief wife takes over his position and responsibilities. This is the point at which the house achieves its final independence economically (though not ritually).

613 It is interesting to note that Lobedu do not, like the Zulu,
 562 identify a lineage segment by its female foundress.

Death and Inheritance

748 On the death of a wife her husband must administer the affairs
 593 of her 'house' to its best advantage. If the children have any
 [602] complaints they may, if their grandparents are dead, make them to the father's cattle-linked sister or to his eldest uterine sister who has considerable influence as 'priestess' of the family.

[573] If the father marries a woman with the cattle of the daughter of such a 'house' such wife will be attached to this house and the sons of the house could use the marriage cattle of the daughters of this woman to obtain wives.

748 When a married woman dies leaving very young children they are generally sent either to the mother's mother or to her sister to be reared. M's son and son's wife died in close succession leaving very young children. Shortly after, when his own

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absence of their menfolk at labour centres, reported every-592
 thing that took place to B. Later C moved away from his 591
 uterine brother B and in 1961 there were three separate home-571
 steads.

The cleavage in a homestead then is on 'house' lines, though
 uterine brothers living together after the death of their father
 also eventually separate. The break may be the result of an 571
 accusation of witchcraft or there may be an amicable separation
 as in the case described above. Reasons for separating vary:
 Batamedi moved away from his uterine brother, a district head-
 man, to satisfy political ambitions—he hoped to be made
 headman of an area to which his family had an ancient claim;
 Poke, a married man, left the homestead of his brother with 561
 his mother and siblings for health reasons, suspecting that
 someone in the homestead might be bewitching him and hoping
 that a change would improve his condition. After many years
 in a different district, he returned to live in the original home-
 stead. Sons do not move away before the death of their father 572
 unless there has been a quarrel in which their mothers are 571
 involved, or unless they become Christians and marry Christian
 girls. Even the death of the father does not necessarily bring
 about the separation of his sons; brothers and half-brothers may
 live together for years. As they marry more wives the size of
 the families increases, the homestead becomes more congested,
 the likelihood of quarrels greater and gradually the 'houses'
 move asunder. If half-brothers and brothers have not separated
 before, then the final break-up of the old homestead will come
 with the death of the eldest brother. For it is rare for a man to
 live under a young heir of the generation below him. Close
 religious and social ties, however, persist long after separation.
 Half-brothers continue to 'inherit' each other's wives and there
 may be a good deal of co-operation in work-parties and much
 consultation in family affairs. Lobedu homesteads are stable
 over long periods and there is a great value attached to remain-
 ing together.

Preferential Marriage down the Generations

The development of the 'houses' in a homestead, leading to the 572
 gradual segmentation of the domestic group and separation of 573
 592

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592 its males is counter-balanced by a 'knitting' together of the
 583 men with their sisters who have married out and a strengthening
 102 of their ties with their maternal kin by means of preferential
 [581] marriage supported by cattle links. This process is illustrated
 in Figure 9.

582 The proportion of mother's brother's daughter marriages in
 its various forms to the total number of marriages among two
 generations of members of a large lineage which was analysed
 in detail (counting the marriage of each woman in a polygynous
 union as a separate marriage) was 34 per cent, of which
 91 per cent were marriages with the mother's uterine brother
 and its derivations. If married men were to be considered,
 the proportion would be higher, 63 per cent of the married
 men having contracted at least one mother's brother's daughter
 marriage; 80 per cent of these were (or were based on) marriage
 with the mother's uterine brother's daughter. This tallies with
 a random sample of 100 cases taken in 1936 in the royal area
 (excluding the Capital itself) in which 67 per cent of the married
 men were found to have married a mother's brother's daughter.

582 But the situation had materially altered by 1962 when a similar
 178 sample of 243 cases in the same area showed mother's brother's
 daughter marriages to have decreased from 67 per cent to
 34 per cent. Of these 94 per cent were with the mother's
 uterine brother or his descendants, which indicates that despite
 strong forces making for change and increased opportunities
 for contacts with strangers of the opposite sex which have
 greatly diminished marriage with distant maternal kin, the
 values attached to 'knitting' together close relatives are still

[177] strong. The most potent forces at work for breaking down
 preferential marriage are Christianity, which condemns it and
 school education which by inculcating Western values makes
 preferential marriage unthinkable to any school child today
 however short a period he has spent at school.

581 That men consciously use marriage to keep alive family
 582 relationships and that they are deeply concerned about these
 602 alliances, can be seen from the case of Modidi (M) in Figure 7.

M's homestead abutted on that of V, whose half-sister K he
 had married (see Figure 7). When they were both old. M took
 his granddaughter L, (his son by V's half-sister K having died
 years before) to his friend V saying, 'I see we are in danger of

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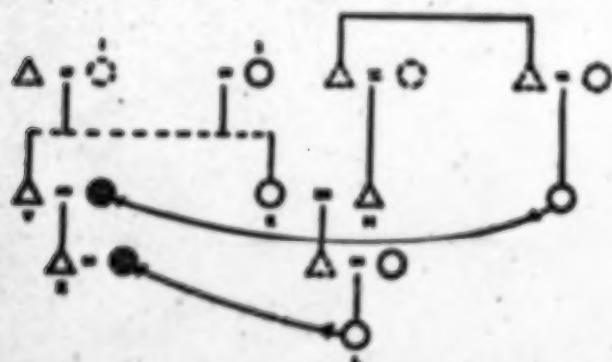
581
582
602

FIG. 7. An arranged marriage (Z to L) to 'knit together' the families of two affines.

growing apart (separating). Here is my son's daughter. Let us knit together the family (*nata lelale*) else soon we shall be lost to one another'. So Z, the son of V, married L, M's granddaughter. It is interesting to note that while M had married V's half-sister, V had also married a 'sister' of M (M's father's brother's daughter), a case of 'brother-sister' exchange which is very rare among the Lobedu. Z was thus marrying his mother's 'brother's' son's daughter, who was at the same time also his father's half-sister's son's daughter.

Marriage from generation to generation with the uterine brother's daughter has important consequences for ancestor worship. It leads to a merging of ancestors on the father's and mother's sides so that they become *malale e mate*—one lineage, as the Lobedu phrase it, with identical ancestors in at least two of the four grandparents' families. If a diviner diagnoses an illness as due to someone in a man's father's mother's lineage (which in the case of two generations of mother's brother's daughter marriages will be the same as the mother's father's lineage), then a man's mother, or even his wife, could officiate in a beer-offering in his homestead to the ancestors concerned. The Lobedu call upon and give offerings on different occasions to all four grandparents and other deceased members of their lineage. It is interesting to note that the mother's mother who never becomes by virtue of preferential marriage an ancestor common to both sides of the family and might thus be in danger of being left out, makes herself very much felt in practice. She

LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

one hand a means of binding the women of the lineage, even ⁵⁸² after their marriage, by strong links to their father's family ⁶⁰² and on the other of maintaining from generation to generation the bonds with the maternal kin created by the marriage of the parents.

A woman has a dual role in the social structure. On the one ⁵⁸² hand by establishing a 'house' in her husband's lineage, she is ⁶¹³ the means whereby his lineage is perpetuated and its numbers increased; for even after the death of her husband his brothers will raise seed to his name and in the absence of sons she can herself ensure the continuation of her husband's lineage by marrying a woman on behalf of a fictitious son. On the other hand a woman remains important to her own lineage: if she is the eldest child of her 'house' she will officiate at all important religious offerings (if her brother is older he may officiate but she will always be called to collaborate with him); when she dies her name and those of her sisters will be included among the names of ancestors called upon in prayer; she divides out the inheritance on the death of her uterine brother; she guards the interests of the children of her cattle-linked brother's 'house' whence she will obtain a daughter-in-law; upon her falls the responsibility in the absence of her parents of providing an heir in her mother's 'house' (of her father's lineage) should there be no son; and she may even act in the place of her deceased father as ruler over a district until the heir is of age or until one can be raised.

The maintenance of links with married sisters and its com- ⁵⁹³ plement marriage with the mother's uterine brother's daughter, ⁵⁸² by means of which one's links with one's wife's (or mother's) ⁶⁰² family are perpetuated, are supreme values in Lovedu society. ⁶¹¹ That is why a wife who has no son has little difficulty in persuading her husband to hand over her daughter's bride-price to her brother rather than create links with a strange family. It is possible thereby to 'build a house' (or 'make a gate') at her brother's home from which her daughter's son will obtain a wife. This may at first sight appear to be very like the transfer of rights from mother to daughter but this is not the case. It is made possible by the transfer of cattle belonging to the daughter's husband and is bound up with the great desire to maintain links between the descendants of brother and sister. The right

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- 583 of a woman to 'someone to stamp for her' from the 'house'
572 created by her bride-price also enables the father of a woman
602 who has no uterine brother to control to some extent, by the
placement of his daughter's cattle, the marriage of her sons.
Her husband 'follows the tracks of his cattle' to find a wife for
his son but it is her father who determines where these 'tracks'
will lead to.

602 There are thus to be found in Lovedu social structure a neat
571 balance between the various kinds of kin; a combination of
patrilineal principles with strong matrilineal bonds; a merging
of ancestors on the father's and mother's side of the family;
and an equality in the importance of paternal and maternal
kin which is seen on all social and ritual occasions and is re-
flected also in the composition of local groups.